

- (a) forming features on a substrate, the features protruding from the substrate to create creases adjacent the features;
 - (b) depositing a layer of non-dielectric material over the features and the creases;
 - (c) removing a portion of the non-dielectric material from the creases using a given method, the given method leaving undesirable residual non-dielectric material in some of the creases; and
 - (d) converting the undesirable residual non-dielectric material in the creases into a dielectric material.
-

C2 22 (once amended). The method, as set forth in claim 18, wherein step (d) comprises the step of oxidizing the undesirable residual non-dielectric material.

23 (once amended). The method, as set forth in claim 18, wherein step (d) comprises the step of nitridizing the undesirable residual non-dielectric material.

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice, and claims 18, 22, and 23 have been amended. Reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.